

Regular Meeting of the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks  
Held at the Falls Church Community Center  
223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church, Virginia 22046

**Minutes**  
**February 7, 2007**

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Meeks called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Members present were Kathy Chandler, Rob Meeks, Gerard Mene, and Charley O'Hara. Staff present was Howard Herman, Director of Recreation, and Linda Weikle, Senior Administrative Assistant.

**2. Receipt of Public Petitions and Board Member Petitions**

Mr. Meeks asked if there were any petitions from the public or board members. There were none.

**3. Minutes**

Mr. Mene moved to approve the January 3, 2007 minutes. Mr. O'Hara seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, the motion passed.

**4. Recreation Director's Report**

Mr. Herman reported:

- He is the Acting General Manager for Community Services in addition to being the Director of Recreation & Parks Department. As General Manager, he oversees the Library, Housing and Human Services and Court Services (and Recreation). Cindy Mester, the former GM for Community Services, was promoted to Assistant City Manager.
- The Farmers' Market has benefited from the good weather. A chocolate candy vendor has been added, bringing the market to 19 vendors.
- The winter session of hobby classes have started.
- Basketball is at the half-way point, with no games having been cancelled since the weather has been good.
- The Department will be pursuing national accreditation through NRPA, as several other departments in the Northern Virginia region are doing or have done.

- The Thomas Jefferson project was delayed by weather and will not be ready in early spring. Staff is working with the schools to find a location for lacrosse. The City was able to obtain Devonshire field space in the afternoons.
- The bid for the generator will be sent out soon. It will be a diesel generator, which has rated the second highest level for standards of emissions by the EPA. It will be located between the Community Center and the shed behind the Community Center.
- The renovations at Frady Park will begin after VPIS redesigns the Arbor Day Commons, and it can be incorporated into the site plan.
- Crews worked in Hamlett Park last week on hazard tree removal. Most of the wood was left in the park to enhance the wildlife habitat. Tree pruning in the park will be done at the appropriate time.

## **5. New Business**

### **a. CIP and Operating Budget**

Mr. Herman distributed a copy of the budget to the Board. There will be a budget work session for the Recreation Division's portion of the budget on April 5, and possibly a CIP work session on April 2. The Recreation Department's budget was submitted with a 3.36% increase. The amount over three percent was due to the transfer of a position from Housing and Human Services to Recreation. The overall Community Services Department budget will be submitted with the requested three percent increase. Mr. Herman reviewed other changes to the budget.

### **b. West End Park Public Hearing**

Mr. Herman briefly presented the West End Park Conceptual Plan.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Tim Twinam, 205 Grove Ave.:

- Opposed to the skate park features because he is concerned about vandalism to the park.
- Agrees with no screening on the Broad Street side of the park and screening on the Falls Avenue side of the park.
- Perform a comprehensive brush clean-up.

Written comments were received from the following:

John Murphy, 308 Chestnut St.:

- Would not be opposed to a change to the skateboard feature and the addition of a swing set or other age appropriate equipment along the lines of the suggestion from Mr. Twinam.

Aline A. Orfali, 1008 Jennifer Lane:

- Add swings to the play area of the park.

The hearing was closed. Mr. Mene moved to approve the West End Park Master Plan; Mr. Webb seconded the motion. Upon unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.

Mr. Herman announced that there will be more hearings about the park design in the fall.

**c. Lee Street Public Hearing**

Mr. Herman summarized the background for purchasing 215 S. Lee St. and a portion of 217 S. Lee St., and distributed a copy of the Hamlett Park Master Plan. He noted that the building at 215 S. Lee St. is not suitable for public use. Mr. Herman also noted that there will be more public hearings concerning the site plan for the park.

The meeting was opened to the public. Residents expressed concern about surveying in the neighborhood and wondered if the City was surveying for sidewalks. Mr. Herman said he did not know why surveyors were in the neighborhood, and he would inquire if DES was surveying for sidewalks.

Dana Upton, 207 S. Lee St:

- Stated that the City is moving too quickly on this project, when access from Thomas Jefferson Elementary School was available. He said that the City should take the accesses it has now and improve them. He suggested that the City gain an easement from the property at 215 and then re-sell the property to put it back on the tax rolls. Alternatively, it's a nice house that could be used for teacher housing or low-income housing, and the City would still have access to the park through the property. He is opposed to the City razing the house solely for access to the park. The City needs to put funding into alleviating the drainage problem. He is opposed to sidewalks in the neighborhood.

Kay Parsons, 209 S. Lee St.:

- Agrees with Mr. Upton. She requested that the neighbors be told before the house is demolished, if that is what the City decides to do. However, she would not want the house demolished. It was one of the first built in the City (1947). She said that it is a small community where the kids play and the neighbors are content. She is concerned that there will be more crime in the neighborhood.

Amy Trombo, 105 S. Lee St.:

- Loves the traffic light at Lee and Broad Streets. She has concerns about traffic/pedestrian/children's safety due to cut-through traffic, lack of sidewalks, cars parking on both sides of the street, and speeding. She is concerned that if the City razes the house and puts in a driveway and/or parking lot, that it will increase the amount of traffic on that street.

Ernest Rodriquez, 200 S. Lee St.:

- Applauds the progress made so far. He loves the idea of the City picking up the property, using what you like, and reselling it. He encourages purchasing easements for access to the park. He thought it would be a natural park with a

trail and not something with structures. He noted that the pole for the traffic light blocks the driver's view; consider setting it back.

Janet Gohres, 121 S. Lee St.:

- Grateful to have the park, and the light at Broad/Lee Streets. She feels that there is a need for a sidewalk so it's clear where pedestrians can travel without interference from traffic. Virginia is full of nature centers so the City really doesn't need to spend money on a nature center; would not want any buildings in the park. Police do need access to the park so they can patrol it easily. Don't need a lot of parking at the park; it will be a neighborhood park for all the condos that are being built in that area (5-6 parking spaces would be sufficient). Walking into the park is part of the experience. She would like the invasive plants removed. Drainage issues need to be corrected.

Glenn Baker, 198 S. Lee St.:

- Applauds the purchase of the land to keep open land in the City. He's glad to see the development going on in the City to increase tax revenues. However, the development in the area is also creating more cut-through traffic on Lee Street. He is opposed to a parking lot at the park. He would like to have more sidewalks for the children to use who have to walk to school. The park serves a great purpose environmentally and would only want low impact changes to improve walking through the park.

Kelly Poort, 413 Rollins St.:

- The issues for Lee Street would be the same for Rollins Street if the park access was changed to Rollins. There are a lot of people parking on Rollins Street for access to Broad Street businesses and the apartment building.

Muriel Grove, 219 S. Lee St.:

- Her guests can't park on Lee Street now and access to the park would make the situation worse. She does not see a need for another access to the park.

Written comments were received from the following:

Alan Brangman, 211 S. Oak St.:

- "I understand that a plan will be developed to include it as part of the Rees (sp) track. And that there is some thought about building a nature center either on it or near it. I would like to suggest the following:
  - i. If the site is to become part of a nature reserve, then nothing should be built on the property, once the house has been demolished.
  - ii. The nothing should be built, should include a parking lot.
  - iii. The Rees track might be better served, if access is the issue, by a simple trail. Similar to the trails that excess in other residential sections of the City. Low key.
  - iv. Perhaps a tot-lot might be considered as an alternative. Although I acknowledge that TJ is right next door.
- Since it is budget time again and the City again seems to be reeling from the low tax intake. Then perhaps we should sell the property and take the sales proceeds and apply that to a teacher's raise.

- Maintain the house as a residence for staff/teacher housing. You could still create a trail back to the Rees property. As a matter of fact you could create the trail even if the house is sold on the open market.”

Telephone comments were received from the following;

Resident, 116 S. Lee St.:

- The City should tear down the house at 215 S. Lee and convert it to parkland with possibly a small parking lot.

Mr. Herman stated that he would look into possible uses for the house. If the City decides to raze the house, information would be provided to explain how that decision was reached.

The hearing was closed.

#### **d. Open Space Acquisition**

A property is on the market and is being considered by the Open Space Committee.

At 7:45 p.m., upon motion made by Board Member Ms. Chandler, seconded by Board Member Mr. O’Hara, and passed by roll call vote of the Board, the Board went into closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) of the Code of Virginia for the investing of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affect.

##### *ROLL CALL VOTE:*

Kathryn Chandler: Yes  
Rob Meeks: Yes

Gerard Mene: Yes  
Charley O’Hara: Yes  
Lawrence Webb: Yes

At 8 p.m., upon motion made by Board Member Ms. Chandler, seconded by Board Member Mr. O’Hara, and passed by roll call vote of the Board, the Board reconvened in open session.

##### *ROLL CALL VOTE:*

Kathryn Chandler: Yes  
Rob Meeks: Yes

Gerard Mene: Yes  
Charley O’Hara: Yes  
Lawrence Webb: Yes

#### **CERTIFICATION**

Upon motion made by Board Member Ms. Chandler and seconded by Board Member Mr. O’Hara and passed upon affirmative roll call vote in open session, it was certified that (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed session or meeting by the Advisory Board.

*ROLL CALL VOTE:*  
Kathryn Chandler: Yes  
Rob Meeks: Yes

Gerard Mene: Yes  
Charley O'Hara: Yes  
Lawrence Webb: Yes

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Chairman

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Date

**6. Old Business**

There was none.

**7. Other Business**

There was none.

**8. Adjournment**

Mr. Mene moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Chandler seconded the motion. Following a unanimous voice vote, Mr. Meeks adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

(Approved March 7, 2007)